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Development & International Relations

experiences from the Nordic countries particularly as related to a consortium approach and teaching methodologies

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Development & International Relations – Experiences from the Nordic countries particularly as relates to a consortium approach and teaching methodologies¹

Johannes Dragsbaek Schmidt²

DIR – Intro to DK and the Nordic Countries

Comments to the Consortium

Predicting the Future by Understanding the Past

Why Study Development and International Relations?

Strategic Choices - Limited Resources and Time

Root Causes of Unequal and Uneven Development

Cutting External Ties that Bind – Re-inventing Grounded Economic Policy-Making

After the End of Globalization – Alternatives

¹ Presentation to an international conference in Halifax (Nova Scotia Canada) on October 19-21- Rethinking International Development Studies: Building a Global Consortium Saint Mary's University

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DIR – Intro to DK and the Nordic Countries

-PhD program funded by the Danish SSRC (five years)

- Approx. 50 doctoral students in DK/250 in Nordic countries

-Doctoral training financed by National SSRC and NORFA – attracts students from other countries as well (UK, Netherland, Canada, developing countries etc)

-DIR doctoral program based on PBL

- Researchbased teaching (also at MA level)

- **-Working with the core theories of the discipline**
- **Working with the core methodologies of the discipline**
- **Students are active participants**
- **Students are supervised to exercise research (applying theory and method)**
- **Teachers are active researchers**
- **Students responsible for their own learning**

- Learning
- **Problem based**
- **Contextual learning/critical research**
- **Activity based learning**
- **Experience based learning**
- Social
- **Participant directed**
- **Team based learning**
- Content
- **Theory-practice relation**
- **Interdisciplinary learning**
- **Exemplary learning/sociological imagination**
- Outcome
- **Critical analytical skills**
- **Creativity skills**
- **Analytical skills**

NB – 2 annual PhD seminars invite keynote speakers who are supposed NOT to present the outcome of their work, but rather concentrate on methodology – Keywords are how, why, when – where are the main frustrations, lack of new knowledge etc

Predicting the Future by Understanding the Past

- Why East Asia and not SSA

Why Study Development and International Relations?

- the term “development” implicitly denotes some degree of teleology, which implies a process of change and transformation in a particular purposeful direction. Development is an on-going process of qualitatively ameliorated social, political and economic change. That is, progressive change which improves and sustains the quality of life in human society. IR theory is concerned with the relationship between state and non-state actors as an issue area.ⁱ Development can no longer be perceived as being a localized or national problem unless it is possible to isolate particular enclaves completely from the international system historically and contemporarily. Development remains a global issue but cannot any longer be perceived as a race whereby the South has the possibility to catch up with the North

-There are plenty of issues which encompass both development studies and IR, i.e. international and regional security, growth and equity, global and regional politics, and as mentioned poverty and the overall problematique regarding trade - the latter being a common denominator for all theories either critically assessed or positively and even aggressively promoted

- As an outcome of this discussion, it can be said that IR /IPE theory and development studies share the following interests:

1) Both relate to varying degrees to the interaction between states, markets, civil societies and international institutions; here the notion of order becomes crucial both at the local, regional and global levels because it is directly related to the balance of forces in the systems both in terms of within social forces and in terms of between social forces. There is great diversity within each discipline and perspective and a new tendency of cross-fertilization among them.

2) Development studies focus on resolving problems of the Third World, based on prescriptions and medicines mainly given by the developed countries. Development studies thus ought to be also considered the discipline of studying North-South relations and as such should be incorporated into IR/IPE.

3) The two disciplines are inseparable! The merger of IPE and development studies must rely on a heterodox set of theories, which can be re-grouped into the differentiation between problem-solving and critical theories.

According to understanding this problem-solving theories are those which tend to prescribe solutions to problems that might unsettle the international system thereby contributing to the perpetuation of the status quo

In contrast critical theory tends to question the existing world order and explore opportunities for change in institutions and social constructions. As such it is possible to make a clear distinction between the two categories based on ontologies and visions

The first comprises the problem-solving theories, which considers the world as the best of all possible worlds. They are status quo oriented, that is, the structures are viewed as viable and changes are limited to reforms within these structures. This theoretical body is deterministic and functions as source for establishing guidelines for decision-makers

The second category consists of the critical theories, which consider the world as being imperfect. They are concerned with understanding the history of the international structure, that is, how it came into being and what the possibilities are for changing it. They thus explore the possibilities for changing the status quo. It is quite obvious that to the first category comprises modernization/neo-liberalism, and neo-mercantilism/neo-realism, while Marxism/dependency and post-modern/postcolonial theories can be situated in the other category

- **All countries with very few exceptions follow the same development model, development strategy and economic policy – this leads to a race to the bottom – with very few winners and a huge majority of losers – therefore we must situate and contextualize, whatever topic or research theme we want to investigate – whether it is the relationship between the private sector and the state, environmental disasters, gender problems, conflict and instability etc. in the local setting always in and international political economy perspective – because there are almost no examples left on the planet of independent types of development – structurally or actor-based – it means that as long as the neo-liberal type of globalization prevails we cannot understand any development oriented research divorced from the international setting**

Strategic Choices - Limited Resources and Time

- Before development research was a mirror of the social sciences where you could transfer whatever approach you wanted, and which was fashionable at that time, to development studies – this is no longer the case. It is now up to the individual researcher and the research centers to make harsh priorities when it comes to provide new knowledge on how to understand the root causes of the crisis of neo-liberal globalization.

Root Causes of Unequal and Uneven Development

(random)

-Standard neoclassical economics strains out the gnats of allocative inefficiency while swallowing the twin camels of unjust distribution and unsustainable scale. The concept of uneconomic growth has to be incorporated into our economic thinking if it is to be capable of expressing what is really happening in the world (Herman Daily, Uneconomic Growth and the Illth of Nations: defining the optimal Scale of the Macro Economy).

-Land reform (unequal access to land) – poverty is the visual out spring of this problem

-An alarming consequence of SAPs has been the disarming of the state – lost its capacities to deliver basic services in health, education, social welfare, and even security for its own people

-Degradation of the environment – climate change/global warming and exhaustion of natural resources for instance (no real technological improvement and no technological fix) – the real problem is the blind faith in economic growth as the only imperative which leaves us with an unsustainable present and future!

- the poor are suffering the most – more growth leads to more suffering! More international trade leads to more suffering!

Cutting External Ties that Bind – Re-inventing Grounded Economic Policy-Making

- Re-inventing the state and economic policy-making which benefits the country**
- Building strong and cohesive regional social compacts as a bulwark against neo-liberal and unfair economic policies and practices from the North**
- One of the major lessons from East Asia is to more or less cut the ties to the Bretton-woods institutions and donors from the West!**
- Another is to make strategic investment policy – and always with majority domestic capital. Otherwise cut ties to foreign companies and capital unless it gives major benefits to domestic capital accumulation, R& D, education etc.**